

GATEWAY GAZETTE

*The Official Publication of the Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America
A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America*

We would like to thank everyone that participated in and enjoyed our 2010 Annual Chili Cook-off! It was a great success! We had a total of 12 entries including some from the JB staff, the PVA members, and one from Jan DeClue. The anticipation was high as everyone lined up to taste the chili selections and declare the winners. It was a delicious way to warm up on a cold afternoon!

Congratulations to the Chili Cook-off Winners!

- 1st place—Joey Avellone (Gateway Chapter member)
- 2nd place—Cindy Lechner (SCI Physical Therapist)
- 3rd place—Ann Malburg (GPVA board member)

Start perfecting your recipes and join us again next year!



Inside—Important Upcoming Events & More...

- A Call to Ameren UE
- Special Extra Earnings for Military Service
- PVA Educational Scholarship Program
- Membership Survey information
- President's Message Stan Brown
- Attaboy Ruth Kult

“Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury or Disease, Living Life to the Fullest”

Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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**May 25-29, 2010
 U.S. Veterans
 GPS Camp**

The Guide to Your Personal Success (GPS) Camp is for all qualified disabled U.S. Veterans who are looking to pursue academics and wheelchair athletics. It will be held at The University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. The camp is designed for beginners, novice, experienced and advanced skilled players. Camp curriculum will include the following adaptive sports: basketball, track, hand-cycling, quad rugby, tennis and other recreational activities. For those with a strong interest in wheelchair basketball the camp will stress fundamentals, reinforce individual skills and team dynamics.

Camp Registration is FREE for all qualified disabled U.S. Veterans

This is a grant-funded camp, all camp-related expenses will be covered for those selected to attend.

Camp includes:

- Round-trip airfare to Tucson
- Airport transfers
- Lodging at the Marriott Hotel at campus
- All meals provided
- Athletic camp instruction
- Wellness seminars
- College transition seminars



Interested in attending?
 Contact: **Dan Standage, Project Coordinator**
 (520)626-9559 or standage@email.arizona.edu

Questions regarding sports?
 Contact: **Coach Derek Brown, (520)247-4305 or**
ddbrown@email.arizona.edu

On-line applications and information:
www.studentaffairs.arizona.edu/VETS
<http://drc.arizona.edu/athletics>

Deadline for applications March 30, 2010



Camera Mouse – Innovative software for people with disabilities

Camera Mouse is a free program available at www.cameramouse.org that enables you to control the mouse pointer on your computer screen just by moving your head.

To use Camera Mouse you need a Windows 7, Vista, or XP computer and a webcam.

Camera Mouse was developed by researchers at Boston College and Boston University to help people with disabilities use the computer. We make it available for free download, with no gimmicks or advertisements, because we want to help as many people as possible.

The main audience for this program is people who do not have reliable control of a hand, but who can move their head.

For more information or to download Camera Mouse please visit www.cameramouse.org

The material contained herein expresses the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or the Gateway Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America. All material in the *Gazette* may be reprinted unless specifically prohibited. Readers are encouraged to submit their articles or rebuttals to:

editor@gatewaypva.org or in the US mail at the address shown to the left and send to the attention of the editor.

President's Report

By Stan Brown



Winter Be Gone

As winter closes in the Midwest (although that's debatable), I hope everyone avoided illness, pneumonia, and all the other respiratory ailments we are so susceptible to catch. Our VA clinics should have made available to you pneumonia vaccinations and the various (I lost count at two) flu vaccinations. If you had any problem receiving that care, please contact us. I recently went to a reunion of the last Army unit I was assigned to, and saw again for the first time since my accident 14 years ago several of the ole' chums. More than one greeted me with the following: "You know, I don't know how to say this, but I thought you died." Each winter and each day I'm still around, is a blessing. As Spring approaches, I hope you feel the same.

Moving Is In Sight

January 15, 2010, we closed on the purchase of our new building in the St. Louis suburb of Creve Coeur. It is about 4 miles east of the interstate that circles St. Louis (I-270). The building has a total of 9821 ft.² and we already have 5000 ft.² rented to a tenant. We now have registered architect drawings completed and are awaiting approval for permits from the municipality. We will then proceed to get bids from various contractors, especially our past supporters, get the work done, and hopefully move in March. If I could cross my fingers, I would. This building should be our location for some time.

Relocation of SCI Rehabilitation

The St. Louis VA and greater VA plans and budget to build 20 new SCI beds at an expanded John Cochran hospital, are unfortunately still on track. These beds are over and above the already approved and budgeted number for this year, which are 6 "acute care" beds at the current John Cochran Hospital. According to the VA, the total SCI beds would eventually be 58, with the 32 existing at Jefferson Barracks, the 6 new acute care beds at John Cochran this year, and the current plans for 20 more SCI beds at John Cochran. Out of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict, there are only 200 estimated SCI injuries. The 52 SCI beds (not counting the 6 acute care beds) planned will not all be needed for rehabilitation. It is clear the St. Louis VA plans are, although not admitted, to eventually convert 32 Jefferson Barracks SCI rehabilitation beds into long-term nursing home care beds. Families staying in the new Fisher House at Jefferson Barracks, and wanting to visit their relative undergoing SCI rehabilitation, will either have to take the bus or drive across town to the John Cochran Hospital.

VA Home Healthcare Services

All veterans in the VA health system, even if you are receiving "aid and attendance" funds or service connected disability payments, may be entitled under VHA Handbook 1140.6, for VA paid personal care assistance in your home. Veterans who are at high risk of imminent nursing home placement and need assistance in daily living activities, could be eligible to receive assistance in their home from VA contracted agencies that provide nurses and certified nurse assistants. Contact SCI Social Worker, Bob Sontag, MSW, at (314) 652-4100, ext. 6-4819.

News Release:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced changes to certain benefits and programs that take effect in 2010. These changes include a delay until June 30, 2010 in out-of-pocket payments for pharmaceuticals. This means the department will delay a scheduled \$1.00 increase to \$9.00 in the co-payments for each 30-day supply of medicine for the treatment of conditions not related to military service. During this period, VA will also keep \$960 as the maximum annual out-of-pocket payments for pharmaceuticals for non-service-related conditions.

Attaboy**By Ruth Kult**

HELLO EVERYONE AND I HOPE YOU ARE HAVING A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WELL, I'M BACK!

My wonderful new computer wasn't so wonderful after all. It decided to poop-out on me. While it was down, I tried to persuade others to submit an article or to do something for their chapter. My plan didn't work as well as I expected.

I'm giving this attaboy to a very nice person who many people don't know, but hopefully that will change. This attaboy is going out to Rusty Ezzell. He's jumping into the chapter's activities and giving us a glimmer of hope that people are reading the newsletter and offering suggestions of participation. Granted it's only one person, but you have to start somewhere. He is taking getting involved with his chapter to a whole new level. We could use more members like this. He isn't just wading in, he's jumping in all the way.

Obviously I'm pretty happy when someone takes an interest in their chapter. Rusty was a significant athlete for our wheelchair games. I always thought Rusty was the coolest from the days of smiling Jennifer Tobey (Hahn). She was the major person responsible for the attendance during both the summer wheelchair games and the Winter Sports Clinic. They existed, but were not spoken of until she brought them to everyone's attention. Thank goodness for Jennifer and her contagious enthusiasm and her unwillingness not to take no for an answer.

In a past article, I believe Rusty said "don't give up!" Well, I'm not. I was taking an unwelcome break. Anyway, we have quite a few point accumulation events coming soon. If you have transportation, or you live nearby and have a love for guns, there's another meat shoot at the High Ridge Elks Lodge on March 21st starting at high noon with our wonderful Ken DeClue, fundraiser extraordinaire. Even if you think it's impossible to participate since your injury, think again because possibilities are their specialties. Thank goodness for Ken, his wife Jan, and his two wonderful granddaughters, for sponsoring these meat shoot fundraisers for our sports team. We are fortunate to have this despite our ugly economy. All funds are always welcome.

Speaking of the meat shoots and Rusty Ezzell, he came to the most recent High Ridge Elks' meat shoot and showed off his shooting skills. Among his aspiring athletic skills, he's quite the marksman. It was a good day for Mr. Rusty; he won some meat in the meat shoot and also won a raffle for one pot shot.

One of our last point accumulation possibilities was the Gateway PVA luncheon at JB, which was also a Chili Cook-off. Of course, there were many people who stopped by to judge the many choices of excellent chili. Once again, Rusty participated and he even made some chili. He might not have won first place this year, but the fact of the matter is he got involved, which is more than many people did. I, like quite a few others, say "maybe next year" but next year seems to come pretty quick.

Finally, guess who will be sharing his talents with us at the VA's Got Talent night? This edition of the newsletter will be printed and sent out a few days after the talent contest, but a little birdie said that Rusty will be performing. This proves my point about Rusty being a truly involved member. He's not afraid to get out of his comfort zone and be heard. Kudos to you Rusty and thanks for taking the plunge into the PVA waters!

Thanks for reading.

MIA

Have you seen or know the whereabouts of these members? They are in danger of being dropped from the PVA roster. Please call us, write to us, or e-mail us if you know where any of these members are! Our contact info is on page 2. Thanks for your help!

Dennis Bazant
Kenneth Frye
William B. Johnson

Samuel Lowery
Jonathan Lewis
Leon Smith

James Sullivan-McGuire
John E. Turner
James White

White House Seeks \$125 Billion for Veterans in 2011

VA Press Release—February 1, 2010

To expand health care to a record-number of Veterans, reduce the number of homeless Veterans and process a dramatically increased number of new disability compensation claims, the White House has announced a proposed \$125 billion budget next year for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“Our Budget proposal provides the resources necessary to continue our aggressive pursuit of President Obama’s two over-arching goals for Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric K. Shinseki. “First, the requested budget will help transform VA into a 21st century organization. And second, it will ensure that we approach Veterans’ care as a lifetime initiative, from the day they take their oaths until the day they are laid to rest.”

The \$125 billion budget request, which has to be approved by Congress, includes \$60.3 billion for discretionary spending (mostly health care) and \$64.7 billion in mandatory funding (mostly for disability compensation and pensions).

“VA’s 2011 budget request covers many areas but focuses on three central issues that are of critical importance to our Veterans—easier access to benefits and services, faster disability claims decisions, and ending the downward spiral that results in Veterans’ homelessness,” Shinseki said.

Reducing Claims Backlog

The president’s budget proposal includes an increase of \$460 million and more than 4,000 additional claims processors for Veterans benefits. This is a 27 percent funding increase over the 2010 level.

The 1,014,000 claims received in 2009 were a 75 percent increase over the 579,000 received in 2000. Shinseki said the Department expects a 30 percent increase in claims—to 1,319,000—in 2011 from 2009 levels.

One reason for the increase is VA’s expansion of the number of Agent Orange-related illnesses that automatically qualify for disability benefits. Veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicides during the Vietnam War are likely to file additional claims that will have a substantial impact upon the processing system for benefits, the secretary said.

“We project significantly increased claims inventories in the near term while we make fundamental improvements to the way we process disability compensation claims,” Shinseki said.

Long-term reduction of the inventory will come from additional manpower, improved business practices, plus an infusion of \$145 million in the proposed budget for development of a paperless claims processing system, which plays a significant role in the transformation of VA.

PVA Advocacy Seeks Air Carrier Discrimination Cases

In most recent cases, courts have held that there is no individual right to sue under the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). While we know that problems for air travelers with disabilities still exist, we are left without a significant means of enforcement. PVA encourages members and others to file informal complaints when any violations occur. However, this remedy may leave the consumer uncertain of its resolution or whether that resolution really changes discriminatory practices.

An alternative means of enforcing the ACAA is to file “formal complaints” with the Department of Transportation (DOT). A formal complaint is covered by the Administrative Procedures Act, and is basically a lawsuit filed with the agency and heard by an independent administrative law judge. DOT has specific rules, as do all courts, as to how and when to file, what evidence may be admitted, when witnesses may be called, etc.

Advocacy staff is developing a procedure to file formal ACAA complaints on behalf of members. We will be looking for complaints which will have a broad impact, e.g., regular or particularly egregious violations, which would merit a formal complaint approach. All formal complaints must be filled within six months of the violation.

Senior Advocacy Attorney Bob Herman will be heading this effort. If you or someone you know has suffered discrimination that violates the ACAA, please contact him at 202-416-7699 or e-mail him at bobhn@pva.org.

PVA EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of the PVA Educational Scholarship Program is to provide assistance to PVA members and members of their immediate family to meet their educational goals. The 2010 scholarships will be in the amount of \$1,000 for full-time students and \$500.00 for part-time students for an academic year. A scholarship awardee will be required to verify their status as a full-time or part-time student in an accredited college or university.

Eligibility

The scholarship program is open to all PVA members, their spouses, and unmarried children under age twenty-four. Individuals who successfully complete the PVA Leadership Program will receive preferential consideration during the selection process.

Submission Process

Individuals who wish to apply for the program must send a request for application to Paralyzed Veterans of America, Attn: Scholarship Program, 801 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, Phone (800)424-8200 Ext. 775 or email douglasb@pva.org. An application packet will be returned to the requestor for completion. Completed applications will be returned to PVA in six copies by **June 17, 2010**. Accompanying documents will include an official transcript or official completion certificate or diploma for each school listed in the application.

A personal statement must be attached to the application and may not exceed two pages. The statement should contain intended courses of study and long and short-term goals. A copy of the personal statement must be attached to each of the six copies submitted.

A letter of recommendation from a faculty member or other school official should accompany the application. Letters should be forwarded directly to PVA for inclusion with the application.

Gateway Chapter PVA Wishes to Welcome the Following New Members:

Michael Rendleman - Caseyville, IL
Franz Gore - Evansville, IN
Leo Smith, Jr. - Grandview, MO
David Holding - Kansas City, MO
Harry Loignon - Wichita, KS
Gail Koenke - Bates City, MO

Porfirio Prieto - Rector, AR
Ricky Boykin - St. Louis, MO
Larry Hibbler - Maryville, IL
Larry Johns - Blue Springs, MO
James Guice - St. Louis, MO
Herman Blackman - Jennings, MO

Please have someone contact our Chapter in the event of a member's death so that we can inform other members who might wish to pay their respects to the departed.



In memory of...

Holt, Wayne A.	Braymer, MO	01/04/2010
Jones, Roy G.	St. Louis, MO	12/30/2010
Kos, Albin B.	Peculiar, MO	10/30/2009
Davolt, Charles	Merriam, KS	08/31/2009



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FROM THE DESK OF SNSO BONNIE HILBURN

I would like to bring to your attention that under certain circumstances, under Social Security, you may be eligible for special extra earnings for your military service. To find out more about this benefit, go to www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm.



Special Extra Earnings for Military Service

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty (including active duty for training), you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings credits may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

Special extra earnings credits are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Special extra earnings credits are **not** granted for inactive duty training.

If your active military service occurred

- **From 1957 - 1967**, we will add the extra credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits.
- **From 1968 - 2001**, you do not need to do anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record.
- **After 2001**, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

How You Get Credit for Special Extra Earnings

The information that follows applies **only** to active duty military service earnings from 1957 through 2001. Here's how the special **extra** earnings are credited on your record:

Service in 1957 - 1977:

You are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

Service in 1978 - 2001:

For every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for complete details.

A Call to Ameren UE

Ameren UE in St. Louis, MO, has a program that allows you to register your electronically-operated medical equipment in your home. Once you've registered your electronically-operated medical equipment with Ameren UE, you're then placed on a list with Ameren UE to be one of the first areas to have your power restored when there are power outages. Some examples of electronically-operated medical equipment include: (1) Specialty Air Mattress; (2) Oxygen Concentrator; (3) CPAP (4) BiPap; (5) APNEA Monitor; (6) Home Kidney Dialysis; and (7) Heart Monitor.

To be placed on Ameren UE's registry, you'll need to contact them at 1-800-552-7583 between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you use Relay, dial 711. Request a Medical Release Form for electronically-operated medical equipment. Once you've received this form in the mail, take it to your attending physician to complete and then return it to Ameren UE.

If you receive services through another utility company, you should also ask them if they have a similar program in your area. Once you obtain the document from your utility company, you can contact your social worker to assist with completing your medical forms.

VAMC - St. Louis 314-652-4100
 Stacy Duncan, MSW, LCSW x6-6220
 Bob Sontag, MSW, LCSW x6-4819





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“As long as there are veterans, the Elks will never forget!”

Ken DeClue shared this motto with me during a recent conversation. After seeing all that the High Ridge Elks does for the veterans, this motto is not hard to believe. We have to give our gratitude to them for another successful fiscal year of fundraising for the JB sports team. Ken recently gave a check in the amount of \$2,141.28 to the appreciative group at Jefferson Barracks. That makes for 8 years of fundraising and bringing in over \$42,000 total. There are three (3) meat shoot fundraisers every year and the next one will be March 21, 2010.

The High Ridge Elks also have a committee that does bingo games on the third Sunday of each month with the SCI patients in building 52 at Jefferson Barracks. They usually give away an average of \$125.00 in cash prizes and refreshments.

We give a special thank you to the High Ridge Elks for always thinking of the veterans!

You deserve a round of applause!



Written by Sannita Brown





LEND YOUR VOICE!

Participate in the 2010 Paralyzed Veterans of America MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Paralyzed Veterans will launch its 2010 Membership Survey in February 2010.

For the past three decades, we have surveyed our membership on various topics to obtain vital information that allows us to plan programs and services to better meet your needs and address your concerns.

You will receive a postcard in the mail with instructions on how to access the survey on our web-site. The web address is www.surveymonkey.com/s/MN2BNJQ

Your participation in this survey is vital.

If you do not have access to the internet and wish to receive a hard copy, contact Rachel Hoelt, Associate Director, Education, at (202) 416-7651.

Thanks in advance for your help. We look forward to continuing to serve you in the years to come.

The Robert M. Woosley, M.D. Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center in St. Louis invites all family members, caregivers, and close friends to our next Family Education Workshop. It will be held on Friday, April 23, from 9am to 3:30pm at our SCI Center at Jefferson Barracks Division of VA Medical Center, Building 52. Topics will include medical, nursing, rehabilitation, dietary, and psychosocial aspects of spinal cord injury, as well as neurological impairments of the spinal cord that are considered non-progressive, such as certain types of multiple sclerosis.

The workshop will be helpful for those family members of veterans who are newly-injured or diagnosed, as well as those who have been living with their impairments for many years. Written materials to supplement the program will also be provided.

For questions or further details, please call Social Worker, Bob Sontag, at 314-652-4100 x6-4819.

<i>March 2010</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 BOD Meeting in Overland at 11:30 am	10	11 Patient Support Group @ JB 1:30 - 2:30 pm	12 KC Member Forum @ Noon—KC VAMC Rec Hall	13
14 Daylight Savings Time Begins	15	16	17  St. Patrick's Day	18 SCI Lunch @ Noon— JB Bldg 52; Qtrly member meeting will follow	19	20  First Day of Spring
21 Elks Meat Shoot High Ridge @ Noon	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Beginning of Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, CO Palm Sunday	29	30	31			

<i>April 2010</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
				1 	2 End of Winter Sports Clinic Good Friday	3
4  Easter Sunday	5	6	7	8 Patient Support Group 1:30 - 2:30 pm VA's Got Talent	9 Newsletter Articles due	10
11 PVA Awareness Week	12	13 BOD Meeting in Overland at 4 pm	14	15 Member Luncheon @ Noon—JB Building 52	16 1st Trap Shoot at Olin in East Alton @10am	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 Family Education Workshop 9am JB—Building 52	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 Arbor Day	

Address Service Requested

Gateway Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of America
9738 Lackland Road
St. Louis, MO 63114



Pictures from Our Hidden Valley Ski Resort Event

At Right: Jeremiah D. shown getting onto the ski lift.

Bottom: Larry H. deserves an "attaboy" for continuing to ski in a smaller ski!



Below: Ruth K. is mastering her snowboarding skills.



"Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury or Disease, Living Life to the Fullest"